

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I raise my voice this morning in concern about the new Medicare prescription drug card that took effect yesterday.

Last week, I visited numerous senior centers in my district to learn that many of those in my district are very confused because they do not have basic information about the program. The low-income seniors I met with are especially frightened because the information was not provided in their language, many who speak Spanish and many who speak Chinese.

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There are 7.2 million low-income seniors whose needs are being ignored, yet the cost of medication is up 27 percent according to AARP.

Additionally, pharmaceutical companies and lobbyists spent \$2.7 million to pass this legislation. Plus, the new Medicare law hurts seniors because a stringent and complex asset test is now in place, prohibiting many seniors in my district from taking full advantage of this program. They are even concerned about their burial plots, that that is going to be used against them.

How dare we implement such legislation. My seniors ask me, Congresswoman, who is there to protect me? We voted for the Congress to protect us. Where are they when we need them? Who is looking out for us?"

#### ONE STEP CLOSER TO SOVEREIGNTY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a big day for Iraq. As The Washington Post reports this morning, "A diverse group of secular figures, political independents, and technical specialists was appointed Tuesday to serve as Iraq's caretaker administration."

As we come to the turnover of sovereignty to this government, we must keep in mind how important our effort in Iraq is. A free Iraq would be a death blow to the terrorists. For too long the people of this region have had no say in the direction of their nations. On June 30, we move one step closer to seeing a nation choose its own course.

The President has been a firm, steady leader during this trying time. He has rightly said that we have not freed Iraq to make them into Americans; we have freed Iraq to allow them to live in freedom. Iraq has the potential to be a great ally in the Middle East. Success there is critical.

#### THE ECONOMY

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, a moment ago we heard the majority

leader say that numbers alone do not give the full picture about the economy. Well, I could not agree more, with the spiraling deficit, more tax cuts for people who are already well off, the refusal of the President and the Republican leadership to fund the No Child Left Behind initiative, or ignoring the promises of candidate Bush to enhance Pell Grants, along with a refusal to tap unemployment insurance funds to help the long-term unemployed.

Americans understand that numbers alone do not give the full picture about the economy. But what I find, meeting with the long-term unemployed in my community, they are looking at misplaced priorities and broken promises; and they, like most Americans, do not like what they see.

#### THE NEED FOR AN ENERGY POLICY

(Mr. COLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the greatest threat to the economic recovery now under way, rising energy prices. Since 2001, the price for a gallon of gasoline has increased by 52 percent, U.S. oil imports have increased by more than 10 percent, the cost of natural gas by more than 92 percent; and Alan Greenspan has repeatedly testified that energy prices are the single greatest threat to job creation.

Mr. Speaker, to meet our growing needs and address these rising energy prices, this House has passed comprehensive energy legislation three times. All three times it has been blocked through legislative obstruction in the other body. This obstruction hurts America. To oppose the President's comprehensive energy legislation while calling for more domestic energy production and lower gasoline prices is hypocritical beyond belief.

Mr. Speaker, for too long America has relied on other nations to provide the raw materials for our energy needs. It is time for us to move towards self-reliance so we are not susceptible to the threats, blackmail, and production fluctuations from abroad. The Congress must move forward with a responsible energy policy. Voting "no" for the energy bill is not an energy plan for America.

#### NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN ADS

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, here we go again. Republicans cannot lead, so they attack the Democrat that will lead America. Here is the proof:

Through the last weekend, the President's campaign has aired 49,050 negative ads against JOHN KERRY, and that

is just in the top 100 media markets. 49,050 times the administration has tried to mislead America about Senator KERRY; 49,050 times the administration has tried to divert America from the administration's absolutely incompetent record on the economy.

Gasoline in Washington State is \$2.75 a gallon. I did not miss that because of the ads. There are countless more negative ads coming from the Republicans because they only know how to tear down, not to lead. JOHN KERRY will lead and win this election. JOHN KERRY will lead and build a stronger America. It starts on November 2.

Meanwhile, America, every time the administration turns on another ad, get up and go to the kitchen for a bag of Fritos. You will not miss a thing.

#### DRUG DISCOUNT CARDS

(Mr. RADANOVICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, never before have American seniors been able to go to one place to price, shop, and compare their prescription drug options. America's seniors are now eligible to receive a Medicare-approved drug discount card at their local pharmacies to save between 10 and 40 percent off the price of most drugs, particularly generics.

It is important to mention the Department of Health and Human Services is the authorized distributor of these nationwide-accepted prescription drug cards. Seniors should be sure that the cards they acquire are approved by the HHS.

Millions of low-income seniors will receive an additional \$600 on their discount card to help pay for prescription drug medicines. Any unused amount of the \$600 credit in 2004 will carry over to the next year.

The competition between organizations offering cards will also help drive down prices. It is time to afford the Greatest Generation the quality prescription drug coverage that they deserve.

#### JOB TRAINING

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, since President Bush took office, 2.2 million Americans have lost their jobs. Americans are suffering through the longest unemployment period in 20 years and the most dismal job picture in almost 40 years.

And what is the Republican leadership doing about it? Having the House vote on tired proposals for job-training vouchers that do not actually create jobs for the millions of Americans who are out of work. Unemployed Americans need jobs and benefits immediately so that they can provide for